

## BRETHREN EVANGELIST

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### A Remarkable Utterance

In a recent interview for the Independent, Hall Caine, the celebrated English literateur, asserting the growth of the Christ idea, employs the following remarkable definition. "By the Christ idea I mean the non-resistance of evil; the idea of the renunciation of all the world has to offer in the way of pleasure, the turning of the other cheek, and the taking no heed for the morrow."

This description of the vital elements in historic Tunkerism, its essence, its kernel, should be extremely interesting to thoughtful Tunkers, coming as it does from so distin-

guished a source, a man who is helping to mould the new thought of the world, a Christian dramatist, who by his genius and his profession is delicately sensitive to the deeper undercurrents of spiritual and physical tendency.

It does not appeal to us mainly because it is a recognition from a high source of the essential truth of Tunkerism, but because it enables us to discern the philosophical basis upon which universal recognition of our doctrine, its ultimate triumph, must rest; and also to distinguish between the gold, silver and precious stones on the one hand, and the wood, hay and stubble on the other, built upon the good foundation by wise and unwise workmen.

All who are familiar with the early history of our church and the spirit which animated its founders will recognize the familiar aspect of Caine's four principles. They entered into the Tunker system fundamentally. They entered, it is true, by the plain road of literal obedience to the Word, but they manifested themselves spiritually rather than technically. They became elements of Tunker character, distinguishing marks which separated them from the world, not theoretically, not doctrinally, but in the deeper spiritual sense that these principles of the Christ life were *fibred in their very nature*. They were wrought in the ideal Tunker by the power of the Holy Ghost. They were the proofs, the ear marks of regeneration.

It was the translation of the letter into spirit. Thus again the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men. Here was a people who practiced non-resistance of evil, because they were so commanded, to be sure, but for a deeper reason still; because the Holy Ghost had put them into the *spirit* of non-resistance. Here was a people who renounced all that the world had to offer in the way of pleasure, because they were so commanded, to be sure; but yet for a deeper reason; because *being regenerated* they no longer *delighted* in or desired the world's pleasures. Here was a people who turned the other cheek, because they were so commanded, certainly; but upon the added, deeper and more vital hypothesis of the *Christ* spirit in them. Here was a people who took no thought for the morrow, because that was the reading of the precept, you say; but we say, because the spirit and repose of faith, translated into trust, dwelt in them; because the *Christ nature* in them trusted in God for the morrow.

Eliminate these fundamental principles from Tunkerism, or reduce them to the bald terms of a merely literal obedience to the letter of the command, as a hireling, for example, will carefully obey the instructions of his employer though he have no heart in the work, and you leave nothing but an empty

shell. And yet in hundreds of Tunker pulpits, this literal obedience, uninterpreted and uniformed with the essential spiritual life, is set forth as the essence of the gospel, and that is the reason it no longer has the power it once had. Frequently we hear our doctrines referred to as unpopular. Believe me, that unpopularity is due more than anything else to the awkward, unphilosophical, and we may say, unscriptural statement of those doctrines from so many representative Tunker pulpits.

The thinking world will not accept any doctrine, will not even listen to it with patience, which does not exhibit a fundamental relation to the inner life. It must show a philosophical relation to character; yea, more than this, it must create character; it must revolutionize conduct from the inner side; it must purify the fountains; it must bring into captivity every thought; it must substitute love for hate, holiness for unchastity, charity for covetousness, fair dealing for sharp practice; and in every other expression of LIFE it must make equally radical revolutions and regenerations, else it is all vanity and dumb show. We believe that the time has come, and we believe that it is the mission of the Brethren church, to bring Tunkerism back to the throne of spiritual power which for this long time bald literalism and barren tradition has compelled it to vacate. *The literal interpretation of the Word is not the end of the gospel, but its agent.* And that literal interpretation must be itself informed and illuminated by the spirit which underlies it, by the divine link which binds it to life, the inner, the daily life, character, conduct; else you have but the letter which killeth, and not the spirit which giveth life.

### Forgetters

A little boy fell into the habit of saying, "I forgot, I forgot," until at last his father, becoming impatient, said to him: "Sam, do you know what Forgot did to himself?" "No, papa." "Well, he busted, and if you don't mind the same luck will follow you."

Come to think of it, the failures and embarrassments which follow in the train of the carelessness and thoughtlessness which lie at the foundation of forgetfulness must be past enumeration. It not only requires thought to maintain a clear grasp of the numberless small things and sometimes tedious details of daily duties, but it also requires a sensitive and responsive energy. What wisdom there is in that exhortation of the apostle to be "instant in season and out of season." He meant that this should govern our habit of obedience to duty. Concentrate for a moment upon that word "instant." You can't find a corner in that word to hide another second of delay. It means so quick a response to the call of duty that the telegram coming from the heart to the brain and from

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